



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
March 20, 2006

Contact: Matt Lambert/John O'Brien  
(202) 225-2132

## **Istook to Senate: ENFORCEMENT FIRST, NO AMNESTY**

*Immigration Reform Must have Real Bite to be Effective*

Washington, DC – Representative Ernest Istook (R-Warr Acres) and 72 additional Members of Congress sent a letter to Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman, Arlen Specter outlining "fundamental principles" necessary for true immigration reform and expressing grave concern over several of the Senate proposals. Fundamental principles include: border security, interior enforcement, enforcement first and no amnesty.

The Members, who led the passage of the House's reform bill in December, worry that some of the Judiciary Committee's proposals are "fundamentally incompatible" with the House's actions and could "doom any chance of a real reform bill reaching the President's desk this year." The letter comes on the same day that Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist is reported to have introduced an enforcement-only bill which will serve as a backstop in case the Judiciary Committee is unable to produce its own proposal.

The letter to Chairman Specter is printed below:

Dear Chairman Specter,

As you know, the House of Representatives passed an immigration reform bill in December. The bill takes several steps to restore order to our anarchical borders and to reform our dysfunctional immigration system. Among other provisions, the bill calls for the construction of a security fence along our southern border, streamlines federal and local law enforcement cooperation on immigration matters, and helps protect American workers by mandating an instant check system for businesses to verify the legal status of their employees. We worked diligently to make sure that our vision for reform passed the House, and we were pleased that it garnered broad bipartisan support.

No reasonable observer - regardless of his or her policy perspective - believes that the current system serves the national or economic security interests of our country. We are all aware of how our porous borders and our lax interior enforcement create opportunities for criminals, whether they are human smugglers, illegal employers or persons sneaking into our country to do us harm. Americans demand that we fix our broken system, now.

We believe that both houses of Congress have a shared responsibility to solve this problem. Unfortunately, we have grave concerns about several of the proposals which have been presented to your committee. We are concerned that some of these proposals are fundamentally incompatible with the desire of the American public for real immigration reform - and their clear opposition to reform proposals that amount to little

more than thinly disguised attempts to provide amnesty. If the Senate were to pass such a proposal, we believe it would doom any chance of a real reform bill reaching the President's desk this year.

In order to provide a roadmap to successful reform, we ask that you consider several fundamental principles when you are crafting your committee's proposal:

- \* **Border Security:** We must make an honest attempt to secure our borders through greater manpower and infrastructure resources - over and above what Congress has already authorized.

- \* **Interior Enforcement:** No solution to illegal immigration will work until we begin to prosecute employers who lure illegal aliens into the U.S.

- \* **Enforcement First:** No foreign worker plan can function unless we have operational control of our borders and unless we know who comes in and out of our country.

- \* **No Amnesty:** Rewarding persons who have broken the law with an advantage that they would not otherwise have had encourages more illegal behavior and is unjust to immigrants who came to the U.S. legally.

Our country desperately needs secure borders. Our constituents demand them. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues in the Senate to pass immigration reform this year.

Sincerely,

Representatives Aderholt, Akin, Alexander, Bachus, Baker, Barrett, Bartlett, Barton, Beauprez, Blackburn, Boozman, Bradley, Burgess, Burton, Campbell, Carter, Cubin, Culberson, Deal, Duncan, Everett, Forbes, Foxx, Garrett, Gingrey, Gohmert, Goode, Gordon, Graves, Gutknecht, Hefley, Herger, Hoekstra, Hostettler, Hunter, Issa, Istook, Jenkins, Johnson (TX), Jones (NC), King (IA), Kingston, Kuhl, Marchant, McCotter, McHenry, McKeon, Gary Miller, Myrick, Ney, Norwood, Otter, Paul, Pence, Pickering, Pitts, Poe, Price (GA), Ramstad, Rohrabacher, Royce, Ryun, Sessions, Simpson, Smith (TX), Stearns, Sullivan, Tancredo, Taylor (NC), Wamp, Weldon (FL).